

## **Awareness on informed consent among residents of Kandy district (A study from Bogahakumbura Division)**

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Informed consent is a patient centralized decision making process. During the “Informed Consent Process” a detailed explanation regarding the medical procedure is given to the patient. This is more than simply signing a written consent form. If communication between the medical staff and the patient takes place satisfactorily, then the patient can also participate in making decisions relating to his/her medical care. Patients’ interest in participating during the decision making process differs according to various factors such as gender, age and education level. Hence, the objectives of this study were to assess the awareness regarding informed consent in the community and to find out whether the awareness varied depending on gender, age group, and educational level.

A sample of 200 was selected using a random sampling method from the Bogahakumbura Division of Kandy District and a pretested questionnaire was administered. The extracted data based on variables were tabulated using Microsoft Excel spread sheets-2007 and analyzed using “JMP Soft Ware-SAS Institute version 6. Chi square test was performed and  $P < 0.05$  was considered as the level of significance.

All the participants stated that informed consent was obtained by hospital staff prior to an invasive procedure (100%). But a significant difference can be identified, as  $P < 0.05$  level understands it as a patient right. The level of awareness varied depending on variables. According to this study the difference in the level of awareness between males and females was statistically not significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). However, the level of awareness increased with the level of education ( $P < 0.05$ ). Also results revealed that young participants were more aware of the informed consent process than the older participants. Awareness declined with participants aged over 58 years ( $P < 0.05$ ).

In conclusion, it can be summarized that the level of awareness on informed consent can be affected by education and age. The results of this study can be used to improve the quality of the informed consent process in order to deliver better quality health care with the aim of enhancing patients’ safety.